

AGRICULTURE

POTATOES—POSSIBLE HAZARD TO LIVESTOCK IF USED AS FEED

Mr. Bill Jarvis (Perth-Wilmot): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture and it arises from his announcement a few days ago that the federal subsidy on potatoes was being extended to those potatoes destined for the livestock feeding industry, particularly cattle feeding. I should like to ask the minister whether he was aware, when this announcement was made, that these potatoes, particularly in western Ontario, are not in cold storage? Was he also aware of the fact that large quantities are either green, rotting or sprouting, which could result in the production of the toxin solanine, which according to the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, the veterinary branch, is a serious hazard to livestock?

● (1440)

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, we are fully aware of that. There are publications probably in every agricultural office which tell the farmers how to feed them to make sure that there are no sprouts and so on on them. I want to make it pretty clear that we offered this program in the first instance to all the provinces but, because of the normal marketing conditions and the normal supply situation in Quebec and Ontario at this time of the year, they did not think that they would have any to feed the livestock. We have said they should be cautious in feeding cattle to make sure that if there are a tremendous number of sprouts these are removed. The potatoes should be introduced gradually into a feeding program, and the livestock should not be put on a complete diet of potatoes all at once. In addition for swine they should be cooked.

Mr. Jarvis: Mr. Speaker, in the light of the fact that the cattle producers, particularly in western Ontario, have not been feeding potatoes over the last few years to their cattle would the minister, rather than rely simply on the government publication which I believe is No. 1527, issue a press release or some kind of information bulletin so that these producers are aware of the dangers and are also aware of the availability of this information, either through their provincial or federal Department of Agriculture offices.

Mr. Whelan: Mr. Speaker, most of the cattle producers I know—and I am sure the hon. member would not want to insinuate that cattle producers in Ontario do not know how to feed cattle—are amongst the most expert in the cattle industry in all of Canada. I will check with my officials to see whether we think it is necessary to do this, but the people I spoke to who want to feed this are expert cattle feeders.

Oral Questions

AIR CANADA

SUGGESTED ENLARGEMENT OF TERMS OF REFERENCE OF ESTEY INQUIRY—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Dan McKenzie (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. During the adjournment debate on Monday, April 28 I requested that Judge Estey's inquiry cover the Air Canada finance branch in Winnipeg. The parliamentary secretary, in answer to me, stated that nothing prevents Judge Estey investigating the financial activities of Air Canada. Will the minister now direct the judge to investigate the billing and labour problems at the finance branch in Winnipeg?

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I think I stated in the House that before the terms of reference were finalized we met with the judge and asked him if he had all the powers to do what he intends to do and what we wanted him to do and he said he had. So, he will decide. I will not tell him to do anything. He is a free man. I think he is intelligent and strong and I do not see how I could decently tell him to go here and there or do this and that.

Mr. McKenzie: Mr. Speaker, I cannot accept all the explanation of the minister. In light of the serious mechanical problems Air Canada is having with its aircraft, such as depressurization problems, engine failures on DC-9's and L10-11's and recent emergency landings, will the minister have Judge Estey inquire into these serious mechanical breakdowns before there is a major fatality.

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): Mr. Speaker, I do not think it is in accordance with the facts to infer that the safety of Air Canada aircraft is weaker than that of the aircraft of other companies. I think sometimes some of these things are probably for the better. For example, it has been said I think in the House, I do not know whether or not by the hon. gentleman, that there was an engine explosion over Ottawa. This was not true at all. It was a reverter which fell down and this happens very often. I do not think there is any need to do what the hon. member asks. I invite the hon. gentleman to visit Air Canada with all the technicians he wishes and visit the repair maintenance shops, so that once and for all he will be either satisfied or dissatisfied with the work.

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[Translation]

CONSUMER AFFAIRS

ALLEGED FALSE ADVERTISING BY NATIONAL CITIZENS COALITION—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Fernand E. Leblanc (Laurier): Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

As the minister is responsible for false, deceitful, misleading and fraudulent advertising, could he tell this House what steps his department intends to take against the National Citizens Coalition Inc. for a false, deceitful and misleading advertisement published today on page 13 of the *Globe and Mail* concerning Bill C-44?